

program. As Mr. Warfield's editorial points out, the funding level in the House bill will not sustain this important program through 2013. I hope our colleagues in the other body will do better.

[Special to Roll Call; June 20, 2012]

WARFIELD: WEATHERIZATION IS EFFECTIVE INVESTMENT

(By Tim Warfield)

The Weatherization Assistance Program employs workers in every state and county in America and has weatherized more than 7.1 million homes over the past 35 years. Weatherization has proved its value and is a highly successful and effective investment in the American workforce—weatherization improvements funded by the 2009 stimulus law alone created 14,000 new jobs, according to the White House Recovery.gov website.

Weatherization reduces household energy use by almost 35 percent in the typical weatherized home, allowing families to use their limited funds for other necessities. The reduction in energy demand also reduces our nation's reliance on foreign oil.

The success of a program that brings the threefold benefit of jobs, household savings and energy conservation is a powerful argument to sustain and fully fund the program, yet it still has its opponents on Capitol Hill, where two Republican House Members have introduced bills to abolish it.

Unfortunately, much of the information that has been presented as an argument to cut funding is a disingenuous misrepresentation of facts. Opponents have created the false impression that remaining stimulus funds will allow the program to serve just as many households in 2013 as it did before the program expansion under the 2009 law. This misstatement occurred again during floor debate recently on the House Energy and water development appropriations bill. The argument about "available funds" would seem to demonstrate that the Weatherization Assistance Program can absorb proposed cuts and still maintain services at a fiscal 2010 level. This characterization is entirely wrong.

Program opponents in the House are taking advantage of the confusion that arises because the "program year" is not the same as the federal fiscal year. The program year was set later in the year at the Weatherization Assistance Program's inception so it wouldn't suffer the disruptive and costly effects of funding gaps that might result from prolonged federal budget negotiations.

In most states, the new program year begins in April, and by that time almost all stimulus funding will be spent. Nominal amounts will remain in three states, but in the vast majority the "available funds" that program opponents propose to use for the 2013 program year will already be used up. Additionally, regular appropriations are similarly depleted, with the \$68 million provided for 2012 being far below a sustainable level. States have already begun slowing down operations and eliminating jobs.

The funding levels debated on the Hill threaten the nationwide network and many states will be hard pressed to operate a program at all in fiscal 2013. For example, at the \$54 million level in the House-passed bill, Arizona, Hawaii and Delaware could weatherize about a dozen homes each in 2013, effectively forcing them to halt services. The ripple effect will disperse a well-trained workforce, reduce purchases from vendors that provide supplies, leave the government investment in equipment and vehicles unused, and leave many families to struggle financially because of high utility bills.

Rather than dismantling a beneficial and cost-effective operation that has been suc-

cessful for 35 years, Congress should allocate funds to sustain the program at its true pre-stimulus level of \$220 million to \$240 million.

We are mindful of the difficult budget choices that face Congress, but these choices should be made based on facts. The facts show that the Weatherization Assistance Program performs a vital role in reducing the burden of high energy prices on low-income families. The program creates jobs and strengthens the economy through the purchase of materials and equipment from the private sector. Each dollar is multiplied as it flows through our communities.

Congress must restore the program to pre-stimulus levels to maintain an effective commitment to weatherization, maintain the trained workforce and provide a much needed economic boost to a fragile economy. Don't allow distortions of the facts to put the truly effective 35-year effort that is the Weatherization Assistance Program in peril.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 29, 2012

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 441, 442 I would not participate in what I strongly believe was an abuse of power by the majority who, for illegitimate reasons, chose to hold the Attorney General, Eric Holder, in contempt of Congress. I was against the rollcall votes.

Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

HOME HEALTH COMMUNITY

HON. THOMAS J. ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 29, 2012

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, America's health care sector is wrought with waste, fraud and abuse, but the home healthcare industry has proposed thoughtful reforms that will strengthen program integrity and achieve substantial savings without burdening beneficiaries.

Among the home health community's proposals are measures to reduce the abusive use of home health care services in order to eliminate excessive overpayments, as well as implement initiatives that will drive innovation and reduce program costs. Other proposed safeguards achieve savings by screening questionable claims, improving payment accuracy, and targeting bad actors. The home health care industry's proposal is a responsible initiative and should be taken into consideration as Congress continues to address ways to reduce health care costs and improve patient care.

Home health care is a key source of clinical treatment for millions of Americans and is meeting complex needs in the most cost-effective, patient-preferred setting available—patients' own homes. Unfortunately, some are now advocating the reintroduction of a copayment for home health services at a time when the industry is already threatened by arbitrary yearly payment cuts. I believe that the imposition of a home health care copayment and

misguided cuts could seriously impact Florida's seniors and result in increased Medicare costs.

The home health community is vital to upholding our commitment to America's seniors and the millions of beneficiaries who depend on a meaningful and affordable Medicare program.

RECOMMENDING THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER BE FOUND IN CONTEMPT OF CONGRESS

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose this misguided effort to inject the politics of a presidential election year into what should be a serious investigation. I oppose the resolutions to hold the Attorney General Eric Holder in criminal and civil contempt, because they are unwarranted and motivated by politics instead of facts. I voted for a resolution sponsored by Rep. JOHN DINGELL to require the Oversight and Government Committee to conduct a real investigation into the Fast and Furious operation. The American public deserves a legitimate investigation into the actions of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in Arizona. Members of Congress have a responsibility to ensure that the ATF was abiding by the law and ensure that the "gun-walking" programs that took place under the Bush and Obama Administrations do not take place again. The American people deserve answers and they deserve an investigation that is based on fact and the truth, not on political gamesmanship and finger-pointing. Unfortunately, these resolutions are not based on real investigations or the desire to prevent future "gun-walking" operations.

This contempt resolution alleges that the Attorney General is not cooperating with the Oversight and Government Reform Committee's investigation. The Attorney General has testified before Congress nine times and the Department of Justice (DOJ) has produced 7,600 pages of documents to the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Additionally, two dozen DOJ officials have testified before the Congress. Something lost in the political allegations on cable news is that the documents at issue in the Contempt Citation are not related to the Committee's investigation into how "gun-walking" was initiated and utilized in Operation Fast and Furious. Attorney General Holder has turned documents relating to Operation Fast and Furious over to the committee. This contempt citation is over the DOJ's internal deliberative documents unrelated to the actual Fast and Furious operation. This contempt resolution does not list any proof that the Attorney General had any knowledge of the Fast and Furious operation. In fact, when the Attorney General did discover the Fast and Furious program he took action to shut down the operation, held those responsible accountable, requested an investigation by the DOJ's IG office and cooperated with House and Senate investigations. To this day, no evidence has shown that he or the President had any knowledge of the Fast and Furious operation.